

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

I am astounded by the way in which the media is continually consolidated, to the detriment of political discourse and cultural variability. The FCC, under Chairman Powell, seems to have completely abdicated its role and turned into the governmental branch of corporate media.

The advent of Clear Channel Communications in radio, for instance, has had a detrimental effect on the range of music - as the company consolidates the 'back ends' of radio broadcast, it makes the formats bland and homogeneous. This has had the effect of making most popular music bland, cynical 'engineered' pop, and has kept out all kinds of genres that never have the opportunity to develop.

Our culture needs diversity. Through deregulation, commodification and unfettered freemarket forces, we could have one or just a few media companies, regardless of the number of media channels. But at what cost?

Worse, the AOL/Time Warners and Viacom of the world have not only sucked up all of the distribution channels, they have also 'vertically integrated' content production, to the point where it is impossible to get honest assessments of all kinds of issues - the companies are in the business of making and reporting on the news. When AOL/TW makes a movie like Harry Potter, distributes it, and reports on it, should it be 'news'? Would the 'story' of its debut be different if we had a thriving, more diversified media landscape?

The FCC owes it to all of us citizens to recognize the special status of media in shaping our democracy and protect the media from undiluted free-marketeering - in other words DO YOUR JOBS!

Yours,
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